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UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 002734

SIPDIS

SAN JOSE FOR USAID/OFDA PHIL GELMAN AND TIM CALLAGHAN;
DEPARTMENT FOR USAID/OFDA: ROB THAYER; KINGSTON/BRIDGETOWN
PLEASE PASS TO OFDA DIRECTOR; GENEVA FOR NKYLOH AND
UN/OCHA, IFRCS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION FOR VOLCANIC ERUPTION AND
FLOODING IN EL SALVADOR

1. EL SALVADOR IS SIMULTANEOUSLY EXPERIENCING TWO NATURAL DISASTER EVENTS. THE SANTA ANA VOLCANO WHICH HAS BEEN SEISMICALLY ACTIVE OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS ERUPTED ON SATURDAY MORNING OCTOBER 1, 2005 SPEWING TONS OF SULFURIC GAS EMISSIONS AND ROCK INTO THE ATMOSPHERE. THE INCIDENT RESULTED IN TWO DEATHS AND THE IMMEDIATE EVACUATION OF UPWARDS OF SIX THOUSAND PEOPLE WHO WERE LOCATED WITHIN 4 KILOMETERS OF THE VOLCANO. ADDITIONALLY, THE COUNTRY HAS ALSO BEEN EXPERIENCING BOTH HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODING. THE CONTINUOUS RAINS HAVE BOTH SATURATED THE SOIL WHICH HAS CAUSED NUMEROUS LANDSLIDES RESULTING IN 37 DEATHS SO FAR AND THOUSANDS OF ADDITIONAL EVACUEES BEING HOUSED IN SHELTERS. THIS HAS ALSO LED TO MAJOR DISRUPTIONS TO THE NATION'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORK AND IT HAS SWELLED THE NATIONS RIVERS WHICH COULD LEAD TO ADDITIONAL MAJOR FLOODING AND THUS THE EVACUATION OF THOUSANDS OF MORE PEOPLE OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS IF THERE IS NO BREAK IN THE INCLEMENT WEATHER.

2. IN RESPONSE TO THESE EVENTS, THE ACTING CHIEF OF MISSION HAS DETERMINED THAT THE DISASTER IS OF SUFFICIENT MAGNITUDE TO WARRANT U.S. GOVERNMENT (USG) ASSISTANCE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR WILL ACCEPT THE ASSISTANCE.

3. THE ACTING CHIEF OF MISSION IS EXERCISING HIS DISASTER ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY AS PER 2 FAM sections 060,061 and 062. AND REQUESTS THAT USAID/OFDA PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF USD 50,000.

4: FUNDS WILL BE CHanneled THROUGH A NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION TO BE DETERMINED AND THE USE OF THE FUNDS WILL ALSO BE DETERMINED WITHIN THE NEXT TWENTY FOUR HOURS.

5. MISSION WILL KEEP OFDA INFORMED OF THIS DISASTER AND MAY REQUEST ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD THE NEEDS JUSTIFY.

BUTLER